



Greyhounds graduate from PCF program

By Kiley Kellermeyer

PLAINFIELD— There were no caps and gowns, but it was a graduation ceremony just the same. Six greyhounds graduated from the Correctional Facility's Second Chance at Life program Wednesday. Second Chance at Life is a Florida-based program designed to rescue ex-racing greyhounds from the kennels. The dogs are sent to various prisons and offenders are given an opportunity to rehabilitate them. The dogs arrived at the Plainfield Correctional Facility on July 15 and 12 offenders were charged with socializing the neglected and sometimes abused canines. Nearly four months later, the first set of dogs were deemed to be rehabilitated. At the graduation ceremony, each handler was allowed to talk about their greyhound and their time together. Unit Team Manager Bill Creamean said the dogs and handlers have traveled "down a rocky road," but that the men overcame the barriers the dogs had put up. "This is the first go with the program," said Justin Bennett, public information officer at the Correctional Facility. "[We] recognized the dogs and the gentlemen who took care of them." Bennett said the graduation is to show the offenders that the staff is appreciative of their work. He said that the graduation is not only a turning point in the dogs' lives, but also in the lives of the men caring for them. "They also get a second chance for life by caring for the dogs," Bennett said. "They get a chance to rehabilitate themselves by taking care of somebody else." The dog handlers have worked with the dogs throughout the months, teaching them five basic commands and getting them used to living with people. Bennett said the offenders and greyhounds have become very close over the past months. "These dogs have really become attached to the gentlemen who have been taking care of them and vice versa," he said. Though it may be hard to let go, Bennett said that another set of dogs will settle in at the Correctional Facility for a few months of rehabilitation in January and the handlers will have another chance to help the needy dogs. When the first six greyhounds entered the facility here, Bennett said they were skinny and afraid. Now, the dogs are healthy and are ready to be adopted by families in the area. Four of the six dogs have already been adopted; the other two are still waiting for homes. Anyone interested in adopting a greyhound may call Bennett at 839-2513.

kiley.kellermeyer@flyergroup.com

Copyright © 1999-2006 cnhi, inc.

Photos

